

Supplementary Readings

To be used with *The Shaping of American Congregationalism*

Readings in the History and Polity of the National
Association of Congregational Christian Churches

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Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor

PREFACE

Learning about the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is not easy. No comprehensive history has been written. Only a few of the founders remain active. No seminary offers a course tailored to it. Months or years of participation, informal contacts, and overhearing the scuttlebutt are usually required. The "Congregational History and Polity" course is designed to accelerate the learning curve by immersing the student in modern Congregationalism's traditions and practices, as well as in the more comprehensive Congregational story.

We see this as essential for seminarians seeking a firm foundation in the community they are preparing to serve. Equally important is educating the many ministers who come to Congregationalism from other traditions. Church members seeking a better understanding of their faith may also appreciate a package that brings widely scattered materials together.

The first volume, for instance, *of Readings in the History and Polity of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches* collects Congregational reflections of the nature of the church(es) as recorded in the *Congregationalist* magazine. The articles collected are neither comprehensive nor definitive; we are not even certain to what extent they are representative. What can, however, be said is that the authors are men and women active in the Association whose views the magazine's editors deemed worthy of distribution.

At the very least the readings collected inform the reader of the parameters of discussion within the NACCC. They will additionally provide an introduction to leaders of the Congregational way and hopefully some insight into this movement's peculiar contribution to the Body of Christ.

This project is in its early stages. We would appreciate your suggestions and notice of our errors and omissions.

Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor

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INTRODUCTION

Though of paramount importance to the sixteenth century founders of Congregationalism, and to the twentieth century founders of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, polity concerns have never constituted the sole focus of Congregationalism. Congregationalists have been deeply involved in the full range of American intellectual, cultural, social, and political life. The Supplementary Readings will engage you in this wider scope of concerns. Most are excerpted from longer works, hoping to give the flavor of the authors' style and letting them define the issues in their own terms. Perhaps you will want to follow up with the complete version of some. The Congregational Library in Boston is available to help you find documents that are no longer in print.

These authors expressed concerns and views in ways considered exemplary or definitive by their contemporaries. It behooves us to pay attention. To understand earlier sections of the path we are now on. To gain insight into contemporary situations. Perhaps even to be awakened to issues and modes of understanding to which our ancestors were better attuned than we. Are certain actual events the will and action of God & others not? When, for example, Edward Johnson marvels at the "Wonder-working Providence of Zion's Savior," which he sees at work in the Puritan migration, it makes our contemporary sense of God's working seems vague & indefinite. As mainline Protestantism is challenged by Pentecostalism and evangelicalism, the early Congregationalists' focus on conversion and church membership again becomes relevant. Urbanism, multiculturalism, immigration? We have still not resolved the issues attended to by Josiah Strong and Washington Gladden.

Some works may feel vaguely alien, even objectionable, from a twentieth century perspective. It could be literary style. The use of "f" for "s" and "v" for "u" (and vice versa), the "thee's" and "thou's" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Or it may be more substantive. Jonathon Edward's "angry God." William Ellery Channing's debunking of traditional doctrines. Josiah Strong's celebration of (and challenge to) the "Anglo-Saxon" race. The point, however, is not so much to judge as to understand the depth and scope of Congregational faith, and to appreciate its enormous creativity. Hopefully to let our minds be expanded by our forebearers and join the dialogue with them in contemporary circumstances.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
GOVERNMENT
OF NEW-ENGLAND
CHURCHES
(1717)

BY
JOHN WISE

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ter Example of natural Wisdom in any settlement on Earth ; for the present and future security of Humane Beings in all that is most Valuable and Grand, then in this. That it seems to me as though Wise and Provident Nature by the Dictates of Right Reason excited by the moving Suggestions of Humanity ; and awed with the just demands of Natural Libertie, Equity, Equality, and Principles of Self-Preservation, Originally drew up the Scheme, and then obtained the Royal Approbation. And certainly it is agreeable that we attribute it to God whether we receive it nextly from Reason or Revelation, for that each is equally an Emanation of his Wisdom, *Prov.* 20. 27. The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the Belly. There be many larger Volumns in this dark Recess called the Belly to be read by that Candle God has Light up. And I am very well assured the fore named Constitution is a Transcript out of some of their Pages, *Joh.* 1. 4, 9. *And the Life was the Light of Men, which Lighteth every Man which cometh into the World.* This admirable Effect of Christs Creating Power in hanging out so many Lights to guide man through a dark World, is as Applicable to the Light of Reason, as to that of Revelation. For that the Light of Reason as a Law and Rule of Right, is an Effect of Christs goodness, care and creating Power, as well

as

C H A P. I.

THE Divine Establishment in Providence of the fore-named Churches in their Order is apparently the Royal assent of the supream Monarch of the Churches, to the grave Decisions of Reason in favour of Mans Natural state of Being, and Original Freedom. For it we should make a new Survey of the Constitution before named under the brightest Light of Nature, there is no greater

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 as of Revelation ; though Revelation is Na-
 tures Law in a fairer and brighter Edition.
 This is granted by the *London Ministers*, P.
 8. C. 3. ' That, that which is evident by, and
 ' consonant to the true Light of Nature, or
 ' Natural Reason, is to be accounted, *Jure*
 ' *Divino*, in matters of Religion. But in the
 further and more distinct management of this
 Plea ; I shall,

1. Lay before the Reader several Principles
 Natural Knowledge.
2. Apply or Improve them in Ecclesiastical
 affairs.
3. Inferred from the Premises, a Demonstra-
 tion that these Churches, if not properly
 Formed ; yet are fairly Established in their
 present Order by the Law of Nature.

C H A P II.

1. I Shall disclose several Principles of Na-
 tural Knowledge ; plainly discovering
 the Law of Nature ; or the true sentiments
 of Natural Reason, with Respect to Mans Be-
 ing and Government. And in this Essay I
 shall peculiarly confine the discourse to two
 heads, viz.

1. Of the Natural [in distinction to the
 Civil] and then,
2. Of the Civil Being of Man. And I
 shall Principally take Baron *Puffendorff* for my
 Chief Guide and Spokes-man.

1. 1

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1. I shall consider Man in a state of Na-
 tural Being, as a Free-Born Subject under the
 Crown of Heaven, and owing Homage to none
 but God himself. It is certain Civil Govern-
 ment in General, is a very Admirable Result
 of Providence, and an Incomparable Benefit
 to Man-kind, yet must needs be acknow-
 ledged to be the Effect of Humane Free-
 Compacts and not of Divine Institution ; it
 is the Produce of Mans Reason, of Humane
 and Rational Combinations, and not from
 any direct Orders of Infinite Wisdom, in any
 positive Law wherein is drawn up this or
 that Scheme of Civil Government. Govern-
 ment [says the Lord *Warrington*] is necessa-
 ry ---- in that no Society of Men can sub-
 sist without it ; and that Particular Form of
 Government is necessary which best suits the
 Temper and Inclination of a People. No-
 thing can be Gods Ordinance, but what he
 has particularly Declared to be such ; there
 is no particular Form of Civil Government
 described in Gods Word, neither does Nature
 prompt it. The Government of the *Jews*
 was changed five Times. Government is not
 formed by Nature, as other Births or Pro-
 ductions ; If it were, it would be the same in
 all Countries ; because Nature keeps the same
 Method, in the same thing, in all Climates.
 If a Common Wealth be changed into a Mo-
 narchy, is it Nature that forms, and brings
 forth the Monarch ? Or if a Royal Family

C

be

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 wholly Extinct [as in *Noah's Case*, being not
 Heir Apparent from Descent from *Adam*]
 is it Nature that must go to work [with
 the King Bees, who themselves alone preserve
 the Royal Race in that Empire] to Breed
 a Monarch before the People can have a
 King, or a Government sent over them? And
 thus we must leave Kings to Resolve which
 is their best Title to their Crowns, whether
 Natural Right, or the Constitution of Go-
 vernment settled by Humane Compacts, un-
 der the Direction and Conduct of Reason.
 But to proceed under the head of a State of
 Natural Being, I shall more distinctly Explain
 the State of Humane Nature in its Original
 Capacity, as Man is placed on Earth by his
 Maker, and Cloathed with many Investitures,
 and Immunities which properly belong to
 Man separately considered. As,

1. The Prime Immunity in Mans State, is
 that he is most properly the Subject of the
 Law of Nature. He is the Favourite Ani-
 mal on Earth; in that this Part of Gods I-
 mage, *viz.* Reason is Congenate with his Na-
 ture, wherein by a Law Immutable, Instampt
 upon his Frame, God has provided a Rule
 for Men in all their Actions, obliging each
 one to the performance of that which is
 Right, not only as to Justice, but likewise as
 to all other Moral Vertues, the which is no-
 thing but the Dictate of Right Reason found-
 ed in the soul of Man. *Milloy, De Mo,*
Pres.

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Pres. That which is to be drawn from Mans
 Reason, flowing from the true Current of
 that Faculty, when unperturbed, may be said
 to be the Law of Nature; on which account,
 the Holy Scriptures declare it written on
 Mens hearts. For being indowed with a
 Soul, you may know from your self, how, and
 what you ought to do, *Rom. 2. 14. These*
having not a Law, are a Law to themselves.
 So that the meaning is, when we acknow-
 ledge the Law of Nature to be the dictate
 of Right Reason, we must mean that the
 Understanding of Man is Endowed with such
 a power, as to be able, from the Contempla-
 tion of humane Condition to discover a ne-
 cessity of Living agreeably with this Law:
 And likewise to find out some Principle, by
 which the Precepts of it, may be clearly and
 solidly Demonstrated. The way to discover
 the Law of Nature in our own State, is by a
 narrow Watch, and accurate Contemplation
 of our Natural Condition, and propensions.
 Others say this is the way to find out the Law
 of Nature. *scil.* If a Man any ways doubts,
 whether what he is going to do to another
 Man be agreeable to the Law of Nature, then
 let him suppose himself to be in that other
 Mans Room; And by this Rule effectually
 Executed. A Man must be a very dull Scho-
 lar to Nature not to make Proficiency in the
 Knowledge of her Laws. But more Particu-
 larly in pursuing our Condition for the civil

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covery of the Law of Nature, this is very obvious to view, viz.

1. A Principle of Self-Love, & Self-Preservation, is very predominant in every Mans Being.

2. A Sociable Disposition.

3. An Affection or Love to Man-kind in General. And to give such Sentiments the force of a Law, we must suppose a God who takes care of all Mankind, and has thus obliged each one, as a Subject of higher Principles of Being, than meer Instincts. For that all Law properly considered, supposes a capable Subject, and a Superiour Power; And the Law of God which is Binding, is published by the Dictates of Right Reason as other ways: Therefore says *Plutarch*, *To follow God and obey Reason is the same thing*. But moreover that God has Established the Law of Nature, as the General Rule of Government, is further Illustrable from the many Sanctions in Providence, and from the Peace and Guilt of Conscience in them that either obey, or violate the Law of Nature. But moreover, the foundation of the Law of Nature with relation to Government, may be thus Discovered. *scil.* Man is a Creature extremely desirous of his own Preservation; of himself he is plainly Exposed to many Wants, unable to secure his own safety, and Maintenance without the Assistance of his fellows; and he is also able of returning Kindness by the furtherance of mutual Good; But yet Man is often found to be Malicious, Insolent-

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and easily Provoked, and as powerful in Executing mischief, as he is ready in designing it. Now that such a Creature may be Preserved, it is necessary that he be Sociable; that is, that he be capable and disposed to unite himself to those of his own species, and to Regulate himself towards them, that they may have no fair Reason to do him harm; but rather incline to promote his Interests, and secure his Rights and Concerns. This then is a Fundamental Law of Nature, that every Man as far as in him lies, do maintain a Sociableness with others, agreeable with the main end and disposition of humane Nature in general. For this is very apparent, that Reason and Society render Man the most potent of all Creatures. And Finally, from the Principles of Sociableness it follows as a fundamental Law of Nature, that Man is not so Wedded to his own Interest, but that he can make the Common good the mark of his Aim: And hence he becomes Capacitated to enter into a Civil State by the Law of Nature; for without this property in Nature, viz. Sociableness, which is for Cementing of parts, every Government would soon moulder and dissolve.

2. The Second Great Immunity of Man is an Original Liberty Instant upon his Rational Nature. He that intrudes upon this Liberty, Violates the Law of Nature. In this Discourse I shall wave

the Consideration of Mans Moral Turpitude, but shall view him Physically as a Creature which God has made and furnished essentially with many Enobling Immunities, which render him the most August Animal in the World, and still, whatever has happened since his Creation, he remains at the upper-end of Nature, and as such is a Creature of a very Noble Character. For as to his Dominion, the whole frame of the Lower Part of the Universe is devoted to his use, and at his Command; and his Liberty under the Conduct of Right Reason, is equal with his trust. Which Liberty may be briefly Considered, Internally as to his Mind, and Externally as to his Person.

1. The Internal Native Liberty of Mans Nature in general implies, a faculty of Doing or Omitting things according to the Direction of his Judgment. But in a more special meaning, this Liberty does not consist in a loose and ungovernable Freedom, or in an unbounded Licence of Acting. Such Licence is disagreeing with the condition and dignity of Man, and would make Man of a lower and meaner Constitution than Brute Creatures; who in all their Liberties are kept under a better and more Rational Government, by their Instincts. Therefore as *Plutarch* says, *Those Persons only who live in Obedience to Reason, are worthy to be accounted free: They alone live as they Will, who have Learnt what they ought to Will.* So
the

that the true Natural Liberty of Man, such as really and truly agrees to him, must be understood, as he is Guided and Restrained by the Tyes of Reason, and Laws of Nature; all the rest is Brutal, if not worse.

2. Mans External Personal, Natural Liberty, Antecedent to all Humane parts, or Alliances must also be considered. And so every Man must be conceived to be perfectly in his own Power and disposal, and not to be controuled by the Authority of any other. And thus every Man, must be acknowledged equal to every Man, since all Subjection and all Command are equally banished on both sides; and considering all Men thus at Liberty, every Man has a Prerogative to Judge for himself, viz: What shall be most for his Benefit, Happiness and Well-being.

3. The Third Capital Immunity belonging to Mans Nature, is an equality amongst Men; Which is not to be denied by the Law of Nature, till Man has Resigned himself with all his Rights for the sake of a Civil State; and then his Personal Liberty and Equality is to be cherished, and preserved to the highest degree, as will consist with all just distinctions amongst Men of Honour, and shall be agreeable with the publick Good. For Man has a high valuation of himself, and the passion seems to lay its first foundation [not in Pride, but] really in the high and admirable Frame and Constitution of Humane Nature.
C 4

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 Nature. The Word Man, I say my Author,
 is thought to carry somewhat of Dignity in
 its sound; and we commonly make use of
 this as the most proper and prevailing Ar-
 gument against a rude Intulrer, viz: *I am not*
a Beast or a Dog, but am a Man as well as your
self. Since then Humane Nature agrees o-
 qually with all persons; and since no one
 can live a Sociable Life with another that
 does not own or Respect him as a Man; it
 follows as a Command of the Law of Na-
 ture, that every Man Esteem and treat ano-
 ther as one who is naturally his Equal, or
 who is a Man as well as he. There be ma-
 ny popular, or plausible Reasons that greatly
 Illustrate this Equality, viz. that we all De-
 rive our Being from one stock, the same
 Common Father of humane Race. On this
 Consideration *Bathius* checks the pride of
 the insulting Nobility.

*Quid Genus et Proavos Strepsitis?
 Si Primordia Vestra,
 Auteremque Deum Spectat,
 Nullus Degener Extat
 Nisi vitiiis Pejora fovens,
 Proprium Deserat Orturn.*

*Fondly our first Descent we Boast;
 If whence at first our Breath we Drew,
 The common Springs of Life we view,
 Tho' Airy Notion soon is Lost.*

The

*The Almighty made us equal all;
 But he that slavishly complies
 To do the Drudgery of Vice,
 Denyes his high Original.*

And also that our Bodies are Composed
 of matter, frail, brittle, and lyable to be de-
 stroyed by thousand Accidents; we all owe
 our Existence to the same Method of propa-
 gation. The Noblest Mortal in his Entrance
 on to the Stage of Life, is not distinguished
 by any pomp or of passage from the lowest
 of Mankind; and our Life hastens to the
 same General Mark: Death observes no Ce-
 remony, but Knocks as loud at the Barriers
 of the Court, as at the Door of the Cottage.
 This Equality being admitted, bears a very
 great force in maintaining Peace and Friend-
 ship amongst Men. For that he who would
 use the Assistance of others, in promoting his
 own Advantage; ought as freely to be at their
 service, when they want his help on the like
 Occasions. *One Good turn Requires another,*
 is the Common Proverb; for otherwise he
 must need esteem others unequal to himself,
 who constantly demands their Aid, and as
 constantly denies his own. And whoever is
 of this Insolent Temper, cannot but highly
 displease those about him, and soon give Oc-
 casion of the Breach of the Common Peace.
 It was a Manly Reproof which *Charactacus*
 gave

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 gave the Romans. *Num Si vos Omnibus &c.*
 What ! because you desire to be Masters of
 all Men, does it follow therefore that all
 Men should desire to be your Slaves, for
 that it is a Command of Natures Law, that
 no Man that has not obtained a particular
 and special Right, shall arrogate to himself
 a Larger share then his fellows, but shall ad-
 mit others to equal Priviledges with himself.
 So that the Principle of Equality in a Na-
 tural State, is peculiarly transgressed by Pride,
 which is when a Man without sufficient rea-
 son prefers himself to others. And though
 as *Hensius*, Paraphrases upon *Aristotle's* Poli-
 ticks to this Purpose. viz. *Nothing is more sui-*
table to Nature, then that those who Excel in
Understanding and Prudence, should Rule and Con-
troul those who are less happy in those Advantages,
&c. Yet we must note, that there is room
 for an Answer, scil. That it would be the
 greatest absurdity to believe, that Nature
 actually Invests the Wise with a Sovereignty
 over the weak ; or with a Right of forcing
 them against their Wills ; for that no Sove-
 reignty can be Established, unless some Hu-
 mane Deed, or Covenant Precede : Nor does
 Natural fitness for Government make a Man
 presently Governour over another ; for that
 as *Ulpian* says, *by a Natural Right all Men are*
born free ; and Nature having set all Men upon
 a Level and made them Equals, no Servitude
 or Subjection can be conceived without Ine-
 quality ;

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 quality ; and this cannot be made without
 Usurpation or Force in others, or Volun-
 tary Compliance in those who Resign their
 freedom, and give away their degree of Na-
 tural Being And thus we come,
 2. To consider Man in a Civil State of Being ;
 wherein we shall observe the great difference
 between a Natural, and Political State ; for in
 the Latter State many Great disproportions
 appear, or at least many obvious distinctions
 are soon made amongst Men ; which Doctrine
 is to be laid open under a few heads.
 1. Every Man considered in a Natural State,
 must be allowed to be Free, and at his own
 dispose ; yet to suit Mans Inclinations to Soci-
 ety ; And in a peculiar manner to gratify the
 necessity he is in of publick Rule and Order, he
 is Impelled to enter into a Civil Community ;
 and Divests himself of his Natural Freedom,
 and puts himself under Government ; which a-
 mongst other things Comprehends the Power
 of Life and Death over Him ; together with Au-
 thority to Injoyn him some things to which he
 has an utter Aversion, and to prohibit him
 other things, for which he may have as strong
 an Inclination ; so that he may be often under
 this Authority, obliged to Sacrifice his Private,
 for the Publick Good. So that though Man
 is inclined to Society, yet he is driven to a
 Combination by great necessity. For that the
 true and leading Cause of forming Governments,
 and yielding up Natural Liberty, and throw-
 ing Mans Equality into a Common Pile to be
 new Cast by the Rules of fellowship ; was really
 and truly to guard themselves against the Inju-
 ries

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ries Men were lyable to Interchangeably; for none so Good to Man, as Man, and yet none a greater Enemy. So that,

2. The first Humane Subject and Original of Civil Power is the People. For as they have a Power every Man over himself in a Natural State, so upon a Combination they can and do bequeath this Power unto others; and settle it according as their united discretion shall Determine. For that this is very plain, that when the Subject of Sovereign Power is quite Extinct, that Power returns to the People again. And when they are free, they may set up what species of Government they please; or if they rather incline to it, they may subside into a State of Natural Being, if it be plainly for the best. In the *Eastern* Country of the *Mogul*, we have some resemblance of the Case; for upon the Death of an absolute Monarch, they live so many days without a Civil Head; but in that *Interregnum*, those who survive the Vacancy, are glad to get into a Civil State again; and usually they are in a very Bloody Condition when they return under the Covert of a new Monarch; this project is to indear the People to a Tyranny, from the Experience they have so lately had of an Anarchy.

3. The formal Reason of Government is the Will of a Community, yielded up and surrendered to some other Subject, either of one particular Person, or more, Conveyed in the following manner.

Let us conceive in our Mind a multitude of Men, all Naturally Free & Equal; going about voluntarily, to Erect themselves into a new Common-Wealth. Now their Condition being such

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such, to bring themselves into a Politick Body, they must needs Enter into divers Covenants.

1. They must Interchangeably each Man Covenant to joyn in one lasting Society, that they may be capable to concert the measures of their safety, by a Publick Vote.

2. A Vote or Decree must then nextly pass to set up some Particular species of Government over them. And if they are joyned in their first Compact upon absolute Terms to stand to the Decision of the first Vote concerning the Species of Government: Then all are bound by the Majority to acquiesce in that particular Form thereby settled, though their own private Opinion, incline them to some other Model.

3. After a Decree has specified the Particular form of Government, then there will be need of a New Covenant, whereby those on whom Sovereignty is conferred, engage to take care of the Common Peace, and Welfare. And the Subjects on the other hand, to yield them faithful Obedience. In which Covenant is included that Submission and Union of Wills, by which a State may be conceived to be but one Person. So that the most proper Definition of a Civil State, is this. *viz.* A Civil State is a Compound Moral Person. whose Will [United by those Covenants before passed] is the Will of all; to the end it may Use, and Apply the strength and riches of Private Persons towards maintaining the Common Peace, Security, and Well-being of all. Which may be conceived as tho' the whole State was now become but one Man; in which the aforesaid Covenants may be supposed under Gods Providence, to be the Dis-

ting

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vine *Fiat*, Pronounced by God, let us make
Man. And by way of resemblance the aforesaid
Being may be thus Anatomized.

1. The Sovereign Power is the Soul infused,
giving Life and Motion to the whole Body.

2. Subordinate Officers are the Joynts by
which the Body moves.

3. Wealth and Riches are the Strength.

4. Equity and Laws are the Reason.

5. Councillors the Memory.

6. *Salus Populi*, or the Happiness of the Peo-
ple, is the End of its Being; or main Busi-
ness to be attended and done.

7. Concord amongst the Members, and all
Estates, is the Health.

8. Sedition is Sickness, and Civil War Death.

4 The Parts of Sovereignty may be con-
sidered: So,

1. As it Prescribes the Rule of Action: It is
rightly termed *Legislative Power*.

2. As it determines the Controversies of Sub-
jects by the Standard of those Rules. So is it
justly Termed *Judiciary Power*.

3. As it Arms the Subjects against Foreign-
ers, or forbids Hostility, so its called the
Power of Peace and War.

4 As it takes in Ministers for the discharge
of Business, so it is called the Right of Ap-
pointing Magistrates. So that all great Officers
and Publick Servants, must needs owe their
Original to the Creating Power of Sovereignty.
So that those whose Right it is to Create, may
Dissolve the being of those who are Created,
unless they cast them into an Immortal Frame.
And yet must needs be dissoluble if they justly
forfeit their being to their Creators.

5. The

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5. The Chief End of Civil Communities, is,
that Men thus conjoynd, may be secured a-
gainst the Injuries, they are lyable to from their
own Kind. For if every Man could secure
himself singly; It would be great folly for
him, to Renounce his Natural Liberty, in which
every Man is his own King and Protector.

6. The Sovereign Authority besides that it
inheres in every State as in a Common and
General Subject. So farther according as it
resides in some One Person, or in a Council
[consisting of some Select Persons, or of all
the Members of a Community] as in a pro-
per and particular Subject, so it produceth dif-
ferent Forms of Common-wealths, viz. Such as
are either simple and regular, or mixt.

1. The Forms of a Regular State are three
only, which Forms arise from the proper and
particular Subject, in which the Supreme Power
Resides. As,

1. A Democracy, which is when the Sovereign
Power is Lodged in a Council consisting of all
the Members, and where every Member has the
Priviledge of a Vote. This Form of Govern-
ment, appears in the greatest part of the World
to have been the most Ancient. For that Rea-
son seems to shew it to be most probable, that
when Men [being Originally in a condition of
Natural Freedom and Equality] had thoughts
of joining in a Civil Body, would without ques-
tion be inclined to Administer their common
Affairs, by their common Judgment, and so must
necessarily to gratifie that Inclination establish
a Democracy; neither can it be rationally i-
maged, that Fathers of Families being yet
Free and Independent, should in a moment, or

little

little time take off their long delight in governing their own Affairs, & Devolve all upon some single Sovereign Commander; for that it seems to have been thought more Equitable, that what belonged to all, should be managed by all, when all had entered by Compact into one Community. The Original of our Government, says *Plato*, [speaking of the *Athenian Commonwealth*] was taken from the Equality of our Race. Other States there are composed of different Blood, and of unequal Lines, the Consequence of which are disproportionable Sovereignty, Tyrannical or Oligarchycal Sway; under which men live in such a manner, as to Esteem themselves partly Lords, and partly Slaves to each other. But we and our Country-men, being all Born Brethren of the same Mother, do not look upon our selves, to stand under so hard a Relation, as that of Lords and Slaves; but the Parity of our Descent incline us to keep up the like Parity by our Laws, and so yield the precedency to nothing but to Superior Vertue and Wisdom. And moreover it seems very manifest that most Civil Communities arose at first from the Union of Families, that were nearly allyed in Race and Blood. And though Ancient Story make frequent mention of Kings, yet it appears that most of them were such that had an Influence rather in persuading, than in any Power of Commanding. So *Justin* describes that Kind of Government, as the most Primitive, which *Aristotle* styles an Heroical Kingdom. viz. Such as is no ways Inconsistent with a Democratical State. *De Princip. Rer. 1. L. 1. C.*

A democracy is then Erected, when a Number of Free Persons, do Assemble together,
in

in Order to enter into a Covenant for Uniting themselves in a Body: And such a Preparative Assembly hath some appearance already of a Democracy; it is a Democracy in *Embrio*] properly in this Respect, that every Man hath the Priviledge freely to deliver his Opinion concerning the Common Affairs. Yet he who dissents from the Vote of the Majority, is not in the least obliged by what they determine, till by a second Covenant, a Popular Form be actually Established; for not before then can we call it a Democratical Government, viz. Till the Right of Determining all matters relating to the publick Safety, is actually placed in a General Assembly of the whole People; or by their own Compact and Mutual Agreement, Determine themselves the proper Subject for the Exercise of Sovereign Power. And to compleat this State, and render it capable to Exert its Power to answer the End of a Civil State: These Conditions are necessary.

1. That a certain Time and Place be Assigned for Assembling.

2. That when the Assembly be Orderly met, as to Time and Place, that then the Vote of the Majority must pass for the Vote of the whole Body.

3. That Magistrates be appointed to Exercise the Authority of the whole for the better dispatch of Business, of every days Occurrence; who also may with more Mature diligence, search into more Important Affairs; and if in case any thing happens of greater Consequence, may report it to the Assembly; and be peculiarly Serviceable in putting all Publick Decrees into Execution. Because a large Body of People

ple is almost useless in Respect of the last Service, and of many others, as to the more Particular Application and Exercise of Power. Therefore it is most agreeable with the Law of Nature, that they Institute their Officers to act in their Name, and Stead

2. The Second Species of Regular Government, is an Aristocracy; and this is said then to be Constituted when the People, or Assembly United by a first Covenant, and having thereby cast themselves into the first Rudiments of a State; do then by Common Decree, Devolve the Sovereign Power, on a Council consisting of some Select Members; and these having accepted of the Designation, are then properly invested with Sovereign Command; and then an Aristocracy is formed.

3. The Third Species of a Regular Government, is a Monarchy which is settled when the Sovereign Power is conferred on some one worthy Person. It differs from the former, because a Monarch who is but one Person in Natural, as well as in Moral account, & so is furnished with an Immediate Power of Exercising Sovereign Command in all Instances of Government; but the fore named must needs have Particular Time and Place assigned; but the Power and Authority is Equal in each.

2. Mixt Governments, which are various and of divers kinds [not now to be Enumerated] yet possibly the fairest in the World is that which has a Regular Monarchy; [in Distinction to what is Dispositick] settled upon a Noble Democracy as its Basis. And each part of the Government is so adjusted by Parts and Laws that renders the whole Constitution an *Elisium*.

It

It is said of the *British Empire*, That it is such a Monarchy, as that by the necessary subordinate Concurrence of the Lords and Commons, in the Making and Repealing all Statutes or Acts of Parliament; it hath the main Advantages of an Aristocracy, and of a Democracy, and yet free from the Disadvantages and Evils of either. It is such a Monarchy, as by most Admirable Temperament affords very much to the Industry, Liberty, and Happiness of the Subject, and reserves enough for the Majesty and Prerogative of any King, who will own his People as Subjects, not as Slaves. It is a Kingdom, that of all the Kingdoms of the World, is most like to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, whose Yoke is easy, and Burden light. Present State of England 1st Part 64 p Thus having drawn up this brief Scheme concerning Man, and the Nature of Civil Government, he is become sole Subject of. I shall nextly proceed to make Improvements of the Premises, to accommodate the main Subject under our Consideration.

2. I shall now make some Improvement of the foregoing Principles of Civil Knowledge, fairly deduced from the Law of Nature. And I shall peculiarly refer to Ecclesiastical Affairs, whereby we may in probability discover more clearly the Kind, and something of the Nature of that Government, which Christ has plac'd in and over, his Church. The Learned Debates of Men, and Divine Writ sometimes seems to cast such a Grandure on the Church & its Officers, as tho' they stood in Peerage with Civil Empire. Rev. 1. 6, 9 1 Pet. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 4. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 2 Cor. 10. 8. But all such Expressions must needs be other-ways Interpreted. God

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is the highest Cause that acts by Council ; and it must needs be altogether repugnant, to think he should fore-cast the State of this World by no better a Scheme, than to Order two Sovereign Powers, in the same Grand Community, which would be like placing two Suns in the Firmament, which would be to set the Universe into a Flame : That should such an Error happen, one must needs be forthwith Extinguished, to bring the Frame of Nature into a just Temper, and keep it out of harms way. But to proceed with my Purpose, I shall go back upon the Civil Scheme, and inquire after two things : First of Rebellion against Government in general, and then in special ; whether any of the aforesaid Species of Regular Government can be predicable of the Church of God on Earth.

1. In General concerning Rebellion against Government for Particular Subjects to break in upon Regular Communities duly Established, is from the premises to Violate the Law of Nature ; and is a high Usurpation upon the first grand Immunities of Mankind. Such Rebels in States, and Usurpers in Churches affront the World, with a presumption that the Best of the Brotherhood are a Company of Fools, and that themselves have fairly Monopolized all the Reason of Humane Nature. Yea, they take upon them the Boldness to assume a Prerogative of trampling under foot the natural original Equality & Liberty of their Fellows ; for to push the Proprietors of Settlements out of possession of their old, and impose new Schemes upon them, is virtually to declare them in a state of Vassalage, or that they were Born so ; and therefore

therefore will the Usurper be so gracious as to insure them they shall not be Sold at the next Market : They must esteem it a favour, for by this time all the Original Prerogatives of Man's Nature are intentionally a Victim, smothering to satiate the Usurpers Ambition. It is a very tart Observation on an *English* Monarch, and where it may by proportion be applied to a Subject must needs sink very deep, and serve for evidence under this Head. It is in the Secret History of K. C. 2. and K. J. 2. p. 2. Says my Author, *Where the Constitution of a Nation is such, that the Laws of the Land are the Measures both of the Sovereigns Commands, and the Obedience of the Subjects, whereby it is Provided ; that as the one are not to Invade what by Concessions and Stipulations is granted to the Ruler ; so the other is not to deprive them of their lawful and determined Rights and Liberties ; then the Prince who strives to subvert the Fundamental Laws of the Society, is the Traytor and the Rebel, and not the People, who endeavour to Preserve and Defend their own.* It's very applicable to particular Men in their Rebellions or Usurpations in Church or State.

2. In special I shall now proceed to Enquire, Whether any of the aforesaid Species of regular, unmixed Governments, can with any good shew of Reason be predicable of the Church of Christ on Earth. If the Churches of Christ, as Churches, are either the Object or Subject of a Sovereign Power intrusted in the hands of Men, then most certainly one of the fore-cited Schemes of a perfect Government will be applicable to it.

Before I pursue the Enquiry, it may not be improper to pause, & make some Caution here,

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 by distinguishing between that which may have
 some Resemblance of Civil Power, and the
 thing it self; and so the Power of Churches is
 but a faint Resemblance of Civil Power; it
 comes in reality nothing near to the thing it
 self; for the one is truly Coercive, the other
 perswasive; the one is Sovereign Power, the o-
 ther is Delegated and Ministerial: But not to
 delay, I shall proceed with my Enquiry, and
 therein shall endeavour to humour the several
 great Claimers of Government in the Church of
 Christ. And

1. I shall begin with a Monarchy. It's cer-
 tain, his Holiness, either by reasonable Pleas, or
 powerful Cheats, has assumed an absolute and
 universal Sovereignty; this fills his Cathedral
 Chair, and is adorned with a Triple Crown,
 and in Defence thereof does protest, *The Al-*
mighy has made him both Key-keeper of Heaven
and Hell, with the adjacent Territories of Purga-
tory, and vested in him an absolute Sovereignty o-
ver the Christian World. And his Right has so
 far prevailed, that Princes and Civil Monarchs
 hold their Crowns and Donations as his Dutiful
 Sons, and Loyal Subjects; he therefore decks
 himself with the Spoils of the Divine Attributes,
 styling himself, *Our Lord God, Optimum, Maximum*
et supremum numen in Terris; a God on Earth, a
 visible Deity, and that his Power is absolute, &
 his Wisdom infallible. And many of the great
 Potentates of the Earth have paid their Fealty,
 as tho' it was really so. One of them Clad in
 Canvas, going Bare-foot in the depth of Win-
 ter, [in Obedience to the Decree, stinting the
 Penance in proportion to the Wickedness of
 Princes] has waited many days for absolution

at

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at hpious Gates. Another has thrown him-
 self down prostrate a humble Penitent before
 him: He has placed his Holy Foot on the Mo-
 narchs profane Neck as crushing a Vermin,
 crawling out of the Stable of his Sovereignty;
 and others frequently kiss his Toes with very
 profound Devotion. These and such like Tri-
 umphant Signals of his Sovereign Power does
 he wear. And indeed if he is the Universal Mo-
 narch of the Catholick Church, Princes that are
 Members of it must needs knock under; for
 that in one World there cannot possibly be two
Most High's, any more than two *Infinities*. Thus
 you see the Clergy, or Gospel Ministry of the
 Christian World have so wisely handled business,
 and managed the Gospel, that they have fairly
 [as they avouch] found a Sovereign Power be-
 queathed in it to the Ministry of Christ, and
 romaging more warily and nicely, at last found
 a Spiritual Monarch, very compleatly furnished
 with the Keys of all sorts of Power hanging at
 his Girdle; and may we not pronounce the wi-
 ser they! seeing the World growing weary of
 Religion, was willing to loll it self down to
 Sleep, and leave them in sole Trust with the
 whole Interest of God's Kingdom. But the sad
 Enquiry is, Whether this sort of Government
 has not plainly subverted the Design of the Gos-
 pel, and the end for which Christ's Government
 was Ordained, viz. the Moral, Spiritual, and
 Eternal Happiness of Men?

But I have no occasion to pursue this Remark
 with tedious Demonstrations: It's very plain,
 it's writt'n with Blood in Capital Letters, to
 be Read at Midnight by the Flames of *Smith-*
field, and other such like consecrated Fires.

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That

That the Government of this Ecclesiastical Monarch has instead of Sanctifying, absolutely Debaucht the World, and subverted all good Christianity in it. So that without the least shew of any vain presumption we may Infer, That God and wise Nature were never Propitious to the Birth of this Monster.

An Aristocracy which places the Supream Power in a Select Company of choice Persons. Here I freely acknowledge were the Gospel Ministry Established the Subject of this Power, viz. To Will and Do, in all Church Affairs without controul, &c. This Government might do to support the Church in its most valuable Rights, &c. If we could be assured they would make the Scripture, and not their private Will, the Rule of their Personal and Ministerial Actions: And indeed upon these terms any Species of Government, might serve the great design of Redemption; but considering how great an Interest is imbarckt, and how frail a bottom we trust, though we should rely upon the best of Men, especially if we remember what is in the hearts of Good Men, [viz. Much ignorance, abundance of small ends, many times cloked with a high Pretence in Religion; Pride Skulking and often breeding revenge upon a small affront; and blown up by a pretended Zeal; Yet really and truly by nothing more Divine than Interest, or ill Nature] and also considering how very uncertain we are of the real goodness of those we esteem good Men

Men; and also how impossible it is to secure the Intail of it to Successors: And also it we remind how Christianity by the foresaid Principle has been peel'd, rob'd and spoiled already; it cannot consist with the Light of Nature to venture again upon such Perils, especially if we can find a safer way home. More Distinctly.

It is very plain [allowing me to speak Emblematically] the Primitive Constitution of the Churches was a Democracy, as appears by the foregoing Parallel. But after the Christian Churches were received into the favour of the Imperial Court, under the Dominion of Constantine the Great; there being many Preliminaries which had furnished the Ministers with a disposition thereunto, they quickly deprived the Fraternities of their Rights in the Government of the Churches, when they were once provided of a plentiful maintenance through the Liberality of Constantine, that when Christianity was so Luxuriantly treated, as by his great Bounty, and Noble settlement, it is said there was a Voice heard from Heaven, saying, *Now is Payson poured into the Church.* But the subversion of the Constitution, is a story too long now to tell. Take therefore part of it, out of a late Author well versed in Antiquity, which may give some brief Image of the whole.

*Non Multa secula jus Plebis Illasum Mansit,
neque Aliter Evenire Potuit, Quin Illud, vel admit-*
tatur,

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tatur, vel saltem diminuat, &c. De Ordina;
Diff. Hyſtorica. P. 36. 40. 41.

The Right of the People did not remain unhurt through many Ages; neither could it well be otherways, but that it must be lost, or much diminished. *Zonaras* does confess that heretofore Bishops were chosen by the Suffrage of the People. But many Seditions happening among them; it was Decreed that every Bishop should hereafter be chosen by the Authority of the Bishops of every Province. The cause seemed to be so very specious, that nothing could be more Decent, or more Conducive to the safety of the Common-Wealth.

Yet [says my Author] if you do well weigh the business, you must needs acknowledge nothing could have happened more Pernicious or Destructive to the Church of God. For soon after these things came to pass, it is very obvious, that Tyranny over the Consciences of the faithful; and an Intolerable Pride every where grew Rampant among the guides of the Church. Yet there was one thing still very needful to be done; and that was to Establish or Confirm the Power which the Metropolitans and Bishops had acquired to themselves. Therefore they fell to it Tooth and Nail to drive away the Fraternity from all Interest in Elections: And alas Poor hearts! They began to sleep with both Ears; that then was scarce any Bre-
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my left to Interrupt, or Controul the Conquerors. This was the manner of the Clergy till they had made themselves the Subjects of all Power and then acted Arbitrarily, and did what they pleased in the Church of God.

But let the learned, knowing World, consider, what the Issue of all this was, *scil.* what a wretched capacity the drowsiness & cowardize of the People; and the Usurpation and Ambition of the Ministry brought the Professing World into. If those who were truly Godly on both sides had in a few Ages lookt down from Heaven, and had Eyed the following Centurys; they might have beheld a world of matter for sorrowful Impressions; to think that they themselves had Occasioned the Ruin of Millions, by their remiss and passive temper in one sort; and too much humouring, and nourishing Pride, and high conceits of themselves and others, in the other; when as if they had stood firm to the Government as left settled by the Apostles; they had certainly prevented an Apostacy that has damned, and confounded a great part of about Thirty Generations of Men, Women, and Children. That for my own part I can upon Experience, in some measure truly say [to the History of the Primitive Churches in the loss of their Government; and the Consequents which followed, when I am Impelled to repeat it to my self] as one *Enas* said to Queen *Dido*.
 In-

Infandum Regina Jubes Renovare Dolorem
 ----- *Quis talia fando*
Temperet e Lacrimis! -----

So doleful a Contemplation is it to think the World should be destroyed by those Men, who by God were Ordained to save it!

In a Word, an Aristocracy is a dangerous Constitution in the Church of Christ, as it possesses the Presbytery of all Church Power: What has been observed sufficiently Evinces it. And not only so but from the Nature of the Constitution, for it has no more Barrier to it, against the Ambition, Insults, and Arbitrary measures of Men, than an absolute Monarchy. But to abbreviate; it seems most agreeable with the Light of Nature, that if there be any of the Regular Government settled in the Church of God it must needs be.

3. A Democracy. This is a form of Government, which the Light of Nature does highly value, & often directs to as most agreeable to the Just and Natural Prerogatives of Humane Beings. This was of great account, in the early times of the World. And not only so, but upon the Experience of several Thousand years, after the World had been tumbled, and tost from one Species of Government to another, at a great Expence of Blood and Treasure, many of the wise Nations

ons of the World have sheltered themselves under it again; or at least have blenished, and balanced their Governments with it.

It is certainly a great Truth, *scil.* That Mans Original Liberty after it is Resigned, [yet under due Restrictions] ought to be Cherished in all wise Governments; or otherwise a man in making himself a Subject, he alters himself from a Freeman, into a Slave, which to do is Repugnant to the Law of Nature. Also the Natural Equality of Men amongst Men must be duly favoured; in that Government was never Established by God or Nature, to give one Man a Prerogative to insult over another; therefore in a Civil, as well as in a Natural State of Being, a just Equality is to be indulged so far as that every Man is bound to Honour every Man, which is agreeable both with Nature and Religion, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honour all Men.* ----- The End of all good Government is to Cultivate Humanity, and Promote the happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate, Honour, &c. without injury or abuse done to any. Then certainly it cannot easily be thought, that a company of Men, that shall enter into a voluntary Compact, to hold all Power in their own hands, thereby to use and improve their united force, wisdom, riches and strength for the Common and Particular good of every Member, as is the Nature of a Democracy;

mocracy; I say it cannot be that this sort of Constitution, will so readily furnish those in Government with an appetite, or disposition to prey upon each other, or imbezle the common Stock; as some Particular Persons may be apt to do when set off, and Intrusted with the same Power. And moreover this appears very Natural, that when the aforelaid Government or Power, settled in all, when they have Elected certain capable Persons to Minister in their affairs, and the said Ministers remain accountable to the Assembly; these Officers must needs be under the influence of many wise cautions from their own thoughts [as well as under confinement by their Commission] in their whole Administration: And from thence it must needs follow that they will be more apt, and inclined to steer Right for the main Point, viz. The peculiar good, and benefit of the whole, and every particular Member fairly and sincerely. And why may not these stand for very Rational Pleas in Church Order?

For certainly if Christ has settled any form of Power in his Church he has done it for his Churches safety, and for the Benefit of every Member: Then he must needs be presumed to have made choice of that Government as should least Expose his People to Hazard, either from the fraud, or Arbitrary measures of particular Men. And it is as plain as day light, there is no Species of Govern-

Government like a Democracy to attain this End. There is but about two steps from an Aristocracy, to a Monarchy, and from thence but one to a Tyranny; an able standing force, and an Ill-Nature, *Ipsa facto*, turns an absolute Monarch into a Tyrant; this is obvious among the Roman *Cæsars*, and through the World. And all these direful Transmutations are easier in Church affairs [from the different Qualities of things] than in Civil States. For what is it that cunning and learned Men can't make the World swallow as an Article of their Creed, if they are once invested with an Uncontroulable Power, and are to be the standing Oratours to Mankind in matters of Faith and Obedience? Indeed some very wise and learned Men are pleased to Inveigh, and Repraach the Notion of a Democracy in the Church, which makes the *Corpus fidelium* or Community of the Faithful the first Subject of the Power of Government. This they say tends to *Brownism*, and abhorred Anarchy; and then say they upon such premises, it must needs follow that every Member of the Body must be an Officer; and then every one must Preach and Dispence the Sacraments, &c.

Reply. Certainly such Gentlemen, either designs to pose and baffle their Reader with fallacy; or they themselves never took up, or understood the true Ideas of the several Species of Government; in that a Democracy is

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as Regular a form, and as particular as any
other. For,

1. An absolute or limited Monarch can't manage the Power or Government Devolved upon him, without the great Officers of the Crown, or a large Set of Ministers; tho' possibly he may with quicker dispatch issue out his Decrees, yet he must Execute all by his Ministry. And why may not a Democracy be indulged the same Liberty? and this will prevent all Anarchy or Confusion most apparently. But,

2. The bitter Pill to swallow in this Doctrine of a Democracy in the Church, is the terrible power of Life and Death; or the accountableness of particular Members to the Assembly, and especially those in the Ministry; but yet this is agreeable with the Nature of the Constitution, and easily managed without Anarchy, or popular Confusion also, which would be made very Evident, if we should but run the parallel in all points between the Democracy of the State and Church. But nextly from the Premises, I shall

3. Infer, That if these Churches are not properly formed, yet are fairly Established in their present Order by the Law of Nature. And will they be advised, I would Exhort them to try who will be so bold as to dare to disseize them. A Monarchy has been tryed in the Church with a witness, but it has absolutely failed us. An Aristocracy in a deep Calm threw the Democracy Overboard, and took not only the Helm in hand, but seized Ship and Cargo as their Right and Title; but after some time brought all to Shipwreck, and that in a good Harbour too.

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A Democracy was the noble Government which beat out in all the bad Weather of Ten bloody Persecutions under the management of Antiquity. And this is our Constitution, and what can't we be pleased? This Constitution is as agreeable with the Light and Laws of Nature as any other whatsoever, as has been fairly hid down, and fully Evinced, and more accommodated to the Concerns of Religion than any other. Therefore I shall now conclude my Demonstration with this brief Appeal to the common Reason of Mankind, viz.

How can it consist with the Honourable Terms man holds upon here on Earth; that the best sort of Men that we can find in the World; such men as are adorned with a double set of Enobling Immunities, the first from Nature, the other from Grace; that these men when they enter into Charter-party to manage a Trade for Heaven, must *ipso facto* be clapt under a Government, that is Arbitrary and Disputick; yea that carries the plain symptoms of a Tyranny in it, when the Light of Nature knows of a better Species, and frequently has made use of it? It wants no farther Demonstration, for it's most apparent, that Nature is so much Mistress of her self, that man in a Natural State of Being, is under God the first Subject of all Power, and therefore can make his own Choice, and by deliberate Compacts settles his own Conditions for the Government of himself in a Civil State of Being: And when a Government so Settled shall throw its self from its Foundations, or the Subjects of Sovereign Power shall subvert or confound the Constitution, they then degrade themselves; and so all Power returns again to

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the People, who are the first Owners. And what! Is Man become so unfortunate, degraded and debased, as to be without all Power in settling a Government over himself, relating to the Matters of his Eternal Well-Being? Or when he comes back to a Fathers House, must he fall into the Capacity of a meer passive Being, and be put under such Tutors, as can easily turn Tyrants over him, and no relief left for him in his own hands; this is certainly most repugnant to the Light of Nature, and very disagreeable with the liberty and free Genius of a Gospel State. Nay, In a word, If the Government of the Churches be settled by God, either in the hands of a Church Monarch, or Aristocracy, and the People are no ways the Subject of Church-Power: Nay, if they are not under Christ, the fountain of Power; then the Reformation so called, is but a meer Cheat, a Schism, and notorious Rebellion; neither is there room left for the least palliation, or shadow of Excuse, for the Reformers in renouncing their Obedience to their Publick Governours. And the Martyrologies which pretend to immortalize the Fame of eminent Heroes, must be changed into Chronicles, handing along an account of the just and deserved fate of a crew of Rebels against God and Government; for what business had such a Company of illiterate and crack brain'd fellows to meddle with their Rulers, or Examine into their Administrations? For if they have no right of Power in Government, they stand absolutely bound to yield a passive Obedience and Non Resistance; and if they are so hardy and daring as to op-

pose their lawful Rulers, the sharpest penalty in this World, is too easie for them; the Inquisition is but dallying and playing with them, Hell is their desert. But how it comes about that a State of Grace, when in want of a suitable Government, is become such a Vassal, and wise and cunning Nature is by her Creator intrusted, and adorned with more enobling Prerogatives, I must leave; and resign unto those Learned Men to Solve, who plead for an Aristocracy in the Churches of Christ.

But to wind up the whole Discourse in a few words, I acknowledge many Objections may be here made, and several Questions of Moment might here fall under Debate; but having obtained what I have principally sought for, in traversing the paths of Nature, in the three following Particulars; therefore with them, and with one Objection answered; and also with some brief Improvement of the Grand Hypothesis in this Demonstration, I shall finish the Argument.

1. Three Particulars; or so many golden Maxims, securing the Honour of Congregational Churches.

Particular 1. *That the People or Fraternity under the Gospel, are the first Subject of Power; or else Religion sinks the Dignity of Humane Nature into a baser Capacity with relation to Ecclesiastical, then it is in, in a Natural State of being with relation to Civil Government.*

Particular 2. *That a Democracy in Church or State, is a very honourable and regular Government according to the Dictates of Right Reason.* And therefore,

Particular 3. *That these Churches of New-*

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 England, in their ancient Constitution of Church
 Order; it being a Democracy, are manifestly Just-
 fied and Defended by the Law & Light of Nature.

2. The Object on. The Plea from the Law of
 Nature for a Democracy in the Church, is as for-
 ceable for any other Species of Government; be-
 cause Nature is furnished with such a variety of
 Schemes as has been pleaded to: And why may not
 the wise Christian Nations take which likes them
 best?

Ans. We must distinguish between man left
 solely to the Direction of the Law of Nature,
 and as the Subject of Revelation, wherein Di-
 vine Wisdom may interpose; and determine on
 some particular Species, without hurting or
 crossing the Law of Nature. Therefore,

1 I readily grant and acknowledge, a Chris-
 tian People may settle what Species of Govern-
 ment they please, when they are solely left to
 determine by the Law of Nature, what Govern-
 ment in the Church they will have. But then
 we must remember, that by the Argument of
 Concession, the Power is originally in the Peo-
 ple; and then our own Case is secure and safe
 enough; both on the account of the Reversion
 of Power, and especially, for that the People the
 first Subjects of Power, have been pleased to
 settle a Democracy for their Government, in
 the Churches of this Country. And if after the
 peaceable Possession of about an hundred years,
 any persons can persuade them to alter their
 Government into any other Species, this will be
 less worthy of blame, then craftily, or unfairly
 to force it out of their hands.

2 It's granted, that according to the Light of
 Nature, there be various regular Models of Go-
 vernment;

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vernment; but if Divine Wisdom is pleased to
 interpose and over-rule Nature's agitations, and
 cast the Scales for this or that particular Form,
 Nature will be but fair mannered to submit to
 its Author and Rector. So that if we find that
 God has Disclosed his Mind by Revelation, that
 his Churches be the Subjects of a Democracy,
 then all stand obliged to comply under a double
 Bond. And so we come under a proper Crisis
 to enquire in the next place for Scripture-evi-
 dence in the Justification of these Churches.

But before I proceed to it, I shall

3. Make some brief Improvement of the
 main Hypothesis in the Demonstration; that is
 to say, If the Government of the Gospel
 Churches, be a Democracy, these Consequen-
 ces must necessarily follow, *scil.*

1. Conf. That the Right of Convoking Coun-
 cils Ecclesiastical, is in the Churches.

2. Conf. That such a Council has only Con-
 sultative, not a Juridical Power in it. A Juri-
 dical Power committed to such a Representa-
 tive Body is both needless, and also dangerous
 to the distinct and perfect States they derive
 from. Compleat States settled upon a Body of
 immutable and imperial Laws as its Basis, may
 want Council; but to Create a new Subject of
 Juridical Power, is some way to indanger the
 Being of the Creators.

3. Conf. That all the Members of an Ecclesi-
 astical Council, deriving from a Democracy are
 Subjects of equal Power. Whatever the Power
 is, the several Delegates must from the nature of
 the Government they derive from, be equal
 sharers in it. Democratical States, in their
 Representative Body can make but one House,
 E 3 because

because they have but one Subject of Supreme Power in their Nature, and therefore their Delegates, let them be who or what they may be, are under equal Trust; so that none can justly claim Superiority over their Fellows, or pretend to a higher power in their Suffrage. Indeed, in such Kingdoms, where the Sovereign Power is distributed and settled in divers Subjects, that the ballance of Power may be more Even, for the safety of the whole, and of all parts under all Acts of Sovereign Power: From such a Settlement of Power, there arises several distinct States in the same Government, which when Convened as one Subject of Sovereign Power, they make different Houses in their Grand Sessions; and so one House or State can Negative another. But in every distinct House of these States, the Members are equal in their Vote; the most Ayes makes the Affirmative Vote, and most No's the Negative: They don't weigh the intellectual furniture, or other distinguishing Qualifications of the several Voters in the Scales of the Golden Rule of Fellowship; they only add up the Ayes, and the No's, and so determine the Suffrage of the House.